



By Ray Henry
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Congressman Sanford Bishop and Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black are meeting to discuss federal spending for agriculture, the state's single-largest economic sector.

The two leaders are planning a news conference Wednesday after a meeting where they will discuss upcoming legislation setting federal agriculture subsidies.

Bishop, a Democrat, sits on an agriculture-focused subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. Black, a Republican, won office in November.

Farming groups are worried about losing subsidies and other federal support, especially as Republicans call for big spending cuts. And President Barack Obama's budget proposes capping direct payments - subsidies paid to farmers regardless of how much they grow - and reducing payments to the wealthiest 2 percent of farmers. Those measures would save \$2.5 billion.